

August 31, 2005

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Upper Mississippi River NW&FR
Comprehensive Conservation Plan Comment
Room 105
51 East Fourth Street
Winona, MN 55987

To whom it may concern:

The Madison Audubon Society supports Alternative D, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service preferred alternative, for the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Alternative D would ensure habitat for birds, fish, and wildlife; for water quality; and for quality recreational opportunities for the future.

The Upper Mississippi River Refuge is recognized as one of the highest quality migration corridors in the nation, with huge numbers of waterfowl, songbirds, and more passing through. Up to 40% of the continent's waterfowl, 50% of its Canvasbacks, and 20% of the eastern U.S. population of Tundra Swans stop in the Refuge during migration, as just a few examples. The fairly recent application of radar ornithology to bird migration shows that the Mississippi River has some of the highest densities of birds per linear mile per hour during the height of migration in Wisconsin. Because of its high importance to birds, the Refuge was recently dedicated as an Important Bird Area.

Madison Audubon represents over 2,500 members throughout south central Wisconsin. While we are not adjacent to the Mississippi River, we care deeply about the resource with its myriad birds, wildlife, and fish. We urge you to do what is in their best interests.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Karen Etter Hale
Executive Secretary

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Karen Etter Hale, Executive Secretary
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--*Making Time for Birds*